THE 992. k. 36

### TEMPEST:

OR, THE

## Terrors of Death.

A

#### POEM in BLANK VERSE.

#### By JAMES RALPH.

But have I now seen Death? Is this the Way I must return to native Dust? O Sight Of Terror, foul and ugly to behold, Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!

MILTON.

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To the Right Honourable

### Sir ROBERT WALPOLE,

Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter.

SIR,

Merit, to ensure a favourable Acceptance from the World, unless recommended by some illustrious Patronage, I have ventur'd with all imaginable Respect to throw my unprotected Labours at Your Feet; hoping, if You can find Leisure amidst those important Affairs in which You are every Day engaged for the Honour and Glory of the Best

Best of Kings, the Good of Your Country, of Europe, and of Mankind, to cast one savourable Look on what I now humbly offer You, I shall be sufficiently defended from the Attacks of those who have a Disposition only for sinding of Faults. I have nothing to introduce me to You but the common Licence of Poets, and the general Fame of Your Goodness and Humanity. Cherish, then, Sir, the Infant Muse, and permit me to declare my self, with all possible Respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient,

most devoted, and

most humble Servant,

James Ralph.

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### TEMPEST:

OR, THE

# Terrors of Death.

HEN blooming Youth, and rosy Health, [combine]
To flatter Mortals with an Age of Joy,

Long, long fecure, from Death's unwelcome Doom; Superbly failing down the fanguine Stream, We float on Reas'nings vain, till Time revolves

The fatal Period, which the firmest Soul

Dismays, and gloom'd with formidable Pomp

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Before unknown, melts the fond Reas'ners Hopes,
Or with a fad Reverse, to Horror turns,
To Horror, such as Death alone can cause,
And renders all his philosophick Courage vain.

Lycus this Truth by fad Experience learn'd,
Who, fond of novel Scenes, and tir'd of all
The gay Amufements that bewitch the World,
O'er the huge Ocean foreign Lands explor'd,
And new difcover'd Climes, full many a League
From Albion's Cliffs, furrounded by the Waves:
There fpent his melancholy Hours beneath
A filent Shade; There, (as the falling Streams
Defcended gently from the neighb'ring Hills,
And in remoter Murmurs dy'd away,)
Sweet Contemplation waited in the Gloom,
And gave a folemn Pleafure to his Soul.

Thus Years were wasted, while with fruitless Toil, He vainly strove to calm his Fears of Death,

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And unconcern'd, behold his dread Approach;
Howe'er begirt with all his *Terrors* round:
For this, with each returning Dawn, he fung
His boasted Precepts; and the vocal Rocks,
Vers'd in the Song, again return'd the Sound.

O wretched Mortals, blinded by your Fears, Who fadly wail the Miferies of Life; Yet shrink with Horror, from the offer'd Cure! And rather choose to bear th' enormous Weight Of pond'rous Evils, which depress the Soul Through ev'ry Stage of your unhappy Lives!

When first the Infant breathes the vital Air,
Sickness, and Pain, are moulded with his Form;
And accidental Woes, unnumbred watch
His thoughtless Hours; Perhaps, paternal Vice
Spreads a Contagion, through his tainted Blood,
And deeply tortures with incessant Pangs:
Born to the Sorrows of a needy Race,

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He wastes in Want his despicable Days,
Or by short Splendor flatter'd in his Pride,
He pensive mourns an Age of Woes away,
Doubly imbitter'd by the fatal Change;
But should exhaustless Heaps of shining Wealth
Show'r in Profusion all that Gold can give:
And Honours great, as Demi-Gods receiv'd,
Float their frail Bubbles, on a boundless Tide;
Would Riches cool the burning Feavers Rage?
Or Titles mitigate the Cholick Pangs?
Alas! in vain the gilded Toys are found,
And dire Diseases triumph over both.

Nor less the common Accidents of Life,
Remorseless, humble Earth's sublimest Sons;
Grown old in Cares, and worn with Dangers grey,
A while, the Merchant glories in his Gain,
And loses in Oblivion all his Fears
Cf wintry Tempests, and destructive Sands;

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But while his Soul's dissolv'd in midnight Sleep,

Lo! round his Wealth, the ruddy Flames arise,

And, with a dreadful Splendor, gild the Brow of [Night;

Then pale with Horror! and with Eyes aghast!

He views the Fruit of many a toilsome Year,

In one malignant Hour, to Ashes turn'd.

Long the fond Lovers burn with secret Fires,
E'er Hymen deigns to wave the bridal Torch;
Yet, when the happy Hour at length arrives,
And both their Souls with mutual Raptures warm;
Some dire Reverse of Fate destroys their Hopes,
And to the Grave they mourn the fatal Cause;
Or should they join in matrimonial Bands,
With all the Ardor of a matchless Love;
Perhaps the nuptial Rites unclose their Eyes,
To view the Faults, in Passion veil'd before:
Whence long domestick Broils, and ceaseless Jar,
Cloud all their Days with an eternal Woe.

Scarce the young Mother strains her new born Babe, In the warm Transport of a first Embrace, E'er merc'less Death arrests the flatt'ring Joy, And in her Arms crops off the infant Life.

Heated with Wine, the dearest Friends engage In mortal Fight, and on th' indignant Blade The Life Blood stream, struck with the frantick Deed A The fad Survivor forrows to the Woods,

And in Despair, with deepest Horror, dies.

Safe from the Dangers of the bloody Field, Where Armies rush on the destructive Sword, And, crown'd with Lawrels, for his mighty Deeds, The Warrior glories in the Breath of Fame:

When Fortune frowns on his fucceeding Days, And blasts his Honours, in their opening Bloom.

The Prince, who long had flourish'd on the Thron An And fway'd whole Nations with his fingle Nod, Wanders an Exile, strip'd of all the Pomp,

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That waits on Crowns, and aggrandizes Courts,

And on a foreign Shore, inglorious falls

By an Assassin's Hand; His cold Remains,

Unburied, gorge the rav'nous Birds of Prey.

Griev'd with his private Wrongs, the Patriot weeps,

And feels his Heart-strings burst with matchless Pain,

When Tyrants plunder his dear native Land,

eed And load with galling Chains her fuff'ring Tribes.

In vain Herculean Strength, or Beauties Bloom,

Would hope to triumph o'er advancing Age;

This ebbs away like Dew Drops in the Sun,

And That confumes as Flax amid the Flames;

eds, Knowledge, the Boast of the sagacious Head,

Sickness impairs, and Care of Life confines;

A fractur'd Scull marrs every prudent Scheme,

Long labour'd in the anxious Statesman's Brain:

ron And turns to Phrenzy, all the Sages learn

In midnight Cells, or the perplexing World;

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Suppose, that to the utmost Verge of Life, With large Additions, 'tis preferv'd entire, What on the Gift attends? But quicker Senfe, Of the long Woes, which in Succession rife: And fad Remembrance, of the mournful Years, In Sorrows wasted and confum'd in Care? --- But all the Pleasures human Life can boast, On airy Pinions, fly like Dreams away; And while the Wretch of one Enjoyment vaunts, A Thousand Tortures gripe his bleeding Heart; Then, who would fear, That kind Physician Death, Who cures immediate all our num'rous Pains, And lays us gently in a downy Sleep, Again to wake in everlasting Joys? Beside, from the first Moment, we began Our toilfome Journey, through the hostile World; Beneath bis Pow'r, his lawless Pow'r we liv'd, And never knew how foon his fatal Dart,

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Would strike us sudden to the filent Grave;
The Fall of Thousands of unequal Years,
Levell'd alike by his resistless Arm,
In secret warn'd us of our own Decay;
And in the solemn Sound of ev'ry Knell,
The dullest Soul's admonish'd of his End.

Again, as Life is likened to a Storm,

Whose cloudy Terrors gloom the live long Day,
Sure, He's the Happiest, whom the Breath of Fate,
Blasts in the earliest Bloom of budding Youth:
For he who spreads his with'ring Leaves abroad,
Till wintry Time silvers his drooping Head,
With falling Snows, and chills with hoary Frosts;
Lamenting suffers with redoubled Pangs,
And pants beneath an heavier Load of Guilt;
So suture Vengeance kindles for his Doom,
With double Rage, proportion'd to his Crimes.
Mean while, within, upbraiding Conscience wakes,

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And rouzes in his Soul the dreadful Thought Of Vices unaton'd, and Punishments to come; Nor wakes alone, when Day-light gilds the Skies But when in Darkness half the Globe's involv'd, And fable Midnight spreads an Horror round, It stings afresh with an augmented Smart, Nor Sleep, That foft Reliever of our Cares! Can calm his Fears, or pacify his Soul; In Dreams, it haunts with visionary Sights Of an indignant Judge, and yawning Hell, Where plaintive Ghosts yell in his frighted Ears, And with ten Thousand Terrors, thro' the Gloom, Black Furies ride, and Chains and Groans refound: So, starting up, he wakes in deep Despair, And vainly wishes his Existence lost; While Sweat, from ev'ry Pore, like Morning Dew, Dropping, distils a-down his trembling Limbs, And stony Horrors stiffens in his Eyes.

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#### [ 11 ]

Thus, he whom black reiterated Crimes Diffract, beneath the Maladies of Age, In Anguish struggles on the Verge of Life; But even, who excell'd in virtuous Deeds, And ever list'ned to Religions Lore, By length of Years grown weary of the World, And worn with Sickness, or distress'd with Pain, The filent Hours in fad Reflection spends, Far, far remote from ev'ry focial Blifs; Till Death, when long implor'd, at last arrives, And ends at once his Evils and his Days. Since then no State, nor Stage of human Life, Is free from Sorrows, or fecure from Care; Since Pains redouble as our Years increase; And Death, however flow, will furely come, Why thoughtless Mortals? Why should you repine? When all your Woes his icy Hand concludes, And foftly finks you to the peaceful Grave,

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There your Remains in downy Slumbers rest, The Cares, and Troubles of the World, unknown; There dark Oblivion hovers o'er the Urns, And with her fable Veil involves the Dead, While fierce Commotions shake the Kingdoms round, And And haughty Monarchs tremble on the Throne. But Death, That kind Conclusion of our Ills, And friendly Guide to our eternal Good, Is imag'd, as the Bane of human Kind, And what with Horror ev'ry Mortal shuns; This is the Cause, why Heroes start at Death, And all our Courage dies in Fear away, When we behold the last retreating Sand In haste to mingle with the fallen Heap. With longing Eyes we take our last Adieu Of all the Joys familiar to our Souls, In vain imploring still a longer Date, And dread to launch into th' eternal World,

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On whose high Verge we then despairing stand,
Till Death indulgent wast us easy down,
To end our Terrors, in the unknown Wave.

So when chill Agues shake the lazy Limbs,
d, And freeze through ev'ry Vein the jelly'd Blood;
To the cold Torrent we reluctant move,
And eye with Horror the tempestuous Stream,
Where, shiv'ring, long we hover on the Brink,
Till forc'd to leave the warmer Air, at last
We plunge beneath, and feel our Pains no more.

Descend, some pitying Angel, and a while
Deign to forsake thy heav'nly Seats of Bliss,
Descend, to learn frail human Kind, that Death,
Though rob'd in Terrors, is a latent Good;
In vain, the Muse would publish to the World,
That Pleasure lurks beneath his darkest Frowns,
And Sun-shine brightens as the Clouds decay;
Or that the melancholy Pomp, which waits

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The breathless Corpse to its eternal Home,
Is all that glooms his dreaded Front:
Whence Mortals fancy he exulting reigns,
High, o'er the darksome Grave, and claps his Wings,
When dire Destruction sweeps whole Armies down,
Then loudly than der to the World this Truth,
Since nought but Thunder, with an Angel's Voice,
Can e'er the rooted Prejudice remove.

'Tis true, reflecting on a future World,

'And fiery Vengeance ever burning there,

Justly, the Sinner dreads approaching Death,

Whose awful Stroke precipitates him down,

Ingulph'd for ever with the sulph'rous Waves;

Tremendous Thought! Till Mercy from on High,

Op'd wide the Gates of Heav'n, and friendly sav'd

The Wretch, despairing, from the Jaws of Hell;

Turn, Sinner turn, she cry'd, and see from far,

Th' Almighty Father reconcil'd again,

See where, thy Saviour crown'd with Glory stands, And earnest pleads, in all the Strains of Love, The Merits of his Death! Vengeance no more Is threatned on the World, but endless Joys Prepare their Circles, on the Wings of Time, To blefs Mankind, and banish all their Woes. Then, wing'd with Faith, address thy Pray'rs to Heav'n, Where JESUS waits to waft 'em to the Throne, And Smiles indulgent on thy gloomy Soul; So, dread the Grave and Hell's dire Pangs no more; Since He, thy Saviour, triumph'd over both, And now, in Blifs, victorious reigns above. Thus to desponding Souls a Comfort springs, Sufficient, to support 'em in the Pains of Death, And calm their Fears of everlasting Flames. But haply, some, fond of a New Belief, Distrust the Notion of a future State, And tremble to refign their Pleasures here,

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Or fleep for ever in Oblivion's Arms;
Let fuch reflect, that all our Joys below,
Bear no Proportion to the Clouds of Woes,
That gloom the melancholy Hours of Life,
So (should the thinking Pow'r no more exist,
And sense of Pain, and Pleasure be forgot)
That calm unactive State's to be preserr'd
To Being, sadden'd with incessant Griefs.

Yet, fince the great Redeemer of the World Writ, with his vital Blood, th' eternal Truth, And that All-pow'rful God who form'd the Earth, And stretch'd the Heav'ns along the trackless Void; Since He endow'd the Soul with all her Gifts, And taught her all she knows, and doubtless can Through boundless Ages her Existence hold; I own, with Joy, the Precept for divine, Nor dare to question what the Godhead taught. So, studious to deserve the great Reward,

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Prepar'd for fuch who live to Virtue's Laws, I, unconcern'd, shall pass my Hours away, And yield undaunted to the Pow'r of Death; Secure, (If no immortal State, should give A Rest of Foy, for all our Cares below,) That no intruding Pain shall e'er disturb The deathful Slumber of unthinking Dust. Thus fung the Youth, ambitious to be thought, Above the Terrors which perplex Mankind, When their last Moments flutter to be gone; But ah! How vain his boafted Reas nings prov'd! Delusive Dreams of Courage never try'd! For then by Distance sweetned to the View, Death look'd an Angel, dress'd in heav'nly Smiles, While joyous Health, and undeclining Youth, Allay'd his Horrors, and with Rofes strew'd The eafy Path. Again, Experience learns

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That Sorrows root the deepest in the Soul;

While on the Surface *Pleasures* only grow,

So, *Those* remain, when *These* are long forgot,

And leave a sad Remembrance of our former Lives.

As, when the Storm that blacken'd in the Skies,
And fcowl'd tremendous o'er the darken'd World,
Has spent its Rage, we trembling recollect
Its dire Descent, and all the Wreck it made,
When Thunders bellow thro' the Air no more,
And golden Clouds adorn th' ætherial Blue;
While swift-wing'd Time revolves a Thousand Days,
All bright, and gladsome, as the Days of Heav'n,
Which unremembred swiftly roll away.
——So Mortals shudder at their past Distress,
And in Oblivion bury all their Joys:

So Lycus fancy'd that perpetual Woes

Shed down their Bane on ev'ry Scene of Life;

And still erroneous, in the silent Shade,

While his dear Solitude was yet indulg'd,

And **Death** remotely threatned from afar,
He vainly studied with fallacious Hopes,
To dare his mortal Stroak, and scorn the greedy Grave.

At length, grown weary of the penfive Life,
And, longing to review his native Shore,
Again he ventur'd o'er the flatt'ring Seas,
Expecting Fate would smooth their swelling Waves,
And safely wast him with auspicious Gales;
A while kind Zephir wav'd his silken Wings,
And barely whiten'd o'er the soaming Surge;
But tir'd, at last recall'd his feeble Aid,
And murmur'd to his Cave: When from the Skies
The Sun, descending in a purple Cloud,
Withdrew his golden Rays; so Night came on,
And with her sable Gloom darken'd the Heav'ns,

And faintly silver'd o'er the drowfy Main.

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And hung in Shades around: Till, from the East,

The waning Moon rose with diminish'd Light,

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Then, folemn Silence shed her peaceful Down,
And through the dreary Night ascending soft,
Breath'd a still Sadness o'er the awful Scene,
And lull'd the boist'rous Winds, and roaring Waves;
The Waves obedient hush'd their seeble Roar,
And the Winds slumber'd on the Ocean's Brim,
Pois'd in the Air the Clouds suspended hung,
And a dead Calm was o'er the Surface spread;
Till the late Hour, when careful seamen rise
To watch the Station of the Midnight Bear,
And wait the Signals of ensuing Gales.

Then, huge, black Clouds, uniting all their Gloom, Rose on a Tempest's Wings, and hov'ring round, Mussled the Stars, and veil'd the friendly Moon In dark Eclipse, bereav'd of all her Rays; Down rush'd the Winds impetuous on the Deep, And rouz'd in all their Wrath th' indignant Waves, Which rolling high, vast as the hoary Alps,

Or Taurus, whiten'd with eternal Snows, Enormous fwell'd; and, with a deaf'ning Roar, Alternate thundred to the diffant Skies, As down they funk beneath each others Weight; Nor less their Fall, than, (wasted by the Fires, For Ages burning in its fulph'rous Womb) If Ætna tumbled from its cloudy Height, And in Confusion levell'd all below: Nor rag'd and roar'd alone, but sparkling dire Gleam'd a pale Splendor thro' the darkfome Night, And cover'd all the Deep with fiery Foam: The guilty Wretch, with Horror shudring, views The dreadful Scene, and thinks the Stygian Lakes So stream, thro' thickest Gloom, their baleful Rays, And fo, inflam'd, their fulph'rous Billows roll. Mean Time, amaz'd! the frighted Seamen hast, To furl the flutt'ring Sails, while rent away

Some drive uproll'd before the furious Gale,

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As rushing on, it whistles round the Masts, And roars tremendous! thro' the broken Shrouds, Loos'd from his Hold, by the refiftless Blast, The giddy Sailor tumbles from on High, And finks amaz'd in the tempestuous Main, Or by the Billows, hurry'd from the Deck, Drinks down his Fate in the unfavory Draught, And joys his Children and his Spouse no more. Aftern, the Pilot, with experienc'd Eye, Observes the Compass as the Tempest veers, And with tenacious Hand the Rudder holds, Though often delug'd by th' unruly Waves; Which, now, uplifted with redoubled Strength, Affault the fuff'ring Bark. Her batter'd Sides refound, B And ev'ry Timber starts beneath the Blow; In vain the Master shouts his Orders loud, Lost in the Storm, his Orders none attend; Yet, anxious for Themselves, they run, they fly,

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Where Danger calls, and eagerly exert Their utmost Strength, and Skill, against the Tempest's While Noify, as the Seas, inceffant Oaths,

And Imprecations dire, are mingled with the Wind.

At length, when all's perform'd, prone on the Deck, With fainting Hearts they fink, and trembling wait The dread Event, while Waves succeeding Waves Burst from on High on their devoted Heads, And cover all beneath their briny Foam.

The Ocean Vapours, kindled by the Storm, A moving Terror! glide on ev'ry Plank, And daunt with fatal Omens ev'ry Soul; Down thro' the rifted Clouds, from East to West, Blue Lightnings flash their Horrors on the Deep, And frequent Thunders, bell'wing all around, Continual Ecchoe thro' the frighted Void. So dire Confusion, riding on the Storm, With double Fury rav'd along the Skie, here

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And shook her Terrors in th' outragious Din

Of Thunders, Winds, and Seas, in one huge Uproan

[join'd]

Nay, should the Whirl of this revolving Globe,

Be stop'd at once by some superior Pow'r;

Scarce would the Noises ring a louder Peal,

Or more Commotions on the Wreck attend,

Tho' from the Surface ev'ry Mountain torn,

And ruin'd Cities, with their busy Crouds,

Were scatter'd sudden thro' the fractur'd Air.

Then Lyous found the Fears of Death prevail,
And vain the Precepts he had long efpous'd;
Mute Horror fate on ev'ry Brow forlorn,
And dire Despair attended ev'ry Look,
And fadden'd all around; no Noise was heard,
But struck a Terror to the inmost Soul,
And ev'ry Billow threatned instant Death;
Then whisper'd Pray'rs were mutter'd to the Skies,

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That He, whose Nod, controuls the Winds and Waves, Would stop the Progress of approaching Fate.

Now close aboard the fatal Rocks are feen, Emerging black, above the whirling Deep! On which the Billows, with incessant Roar, Outragious beat, and foam the Ocean round For many a League, there dire Destruction dwells, And heightens all the Horrors of the Wreck, There howls for Slaughter to the Waves and Winds, And whitens o'er the Beach with human Bones, The Spoils of Death! With loud Laments they view The horrid Shore, and frantick beat their Breafts in the mad Transports of excessive Fear; While fore distress'd, and foundring in the Waves, The leaky Veffel thro' the Tempest drives In certain Ruin, with an Arrow's Speed, kies, er Masts disabled, and her Rudder broke; vain they labour to avert their Fate,

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And view the Skies with fuperstitious Gaze; In vain they tremble on the Brink of Death, And make to Heav'n reiterated Vows, If fafe they breathe their native Air again; For, hurried on by the refiftless Winds, The Bark strikes, furious, on the lurking Rocks, And bulging finks ingulph'd amid the Waves; While with a gen'ral Groan the haples Crew, Eccho their Sorrows to the dreadful Shock: And o'er the baleful Wreck huge Billows roll, And muster all their Rage; fo deep immers'd Beneath the watry Mountains, they refign Their Souls to Death, and, broken by the Surge The shatter'd Fragments of the Vessel float With lifeless Bodies, mingled in the boiling Foam So when, with fubterranean Vapours heav'd, A City totters on her crumbling Base, The frighted Tribes aghast! with lifted Hands,

To the far Heav'ns bewail their sudden Woes, While, with an hideous Crash, the Buildings fall, And huge Destruction ruins all around.

Thus Lycus learn'd how terrible is Death,
And, e'er the Surges rav'd around his Head,
All pale with Horror, shudder'd at his Fate;
Despairing Life, he yet implor'd to live,
And mourn'd his Years so soon revolv'd away
Midst all the Terrors of the roaring Deep,
Till the sad Soul could fear grim Death no more,
And thro' the Storm ascended from the Waves.

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